



Plant cutting exchange with Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden, Tasmania

By Andrew Rouse, ARSV President

In mid-December 2024, John O'Hara, Prue Crome and I visited Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden for the third round of cutting exchange. We took with us 40 vireya species and returned with 45 different non-vireya (lepidote and elepidote) rhododendron cuttings.

Upon our return, the cuttings were processed and are now in the propagation house.

They are in good condition, so we are hoping we can get a good strike rate.

Prior to the trip, the ARSV Tuesday Group gave the propagation glasshouse its annual clean. This entails removing all the pots, cleaning surfaces and replacing the perlite on the benches.

The cuttings will be grown on in the nursery and eventually be planted out in a refurbished Rhododendron species bed in the gardens.

Great work by all involved!



Here is our new ARSV brand logo, which will be used across our documents, literature and media platforms.

Committee and Key Team Members			
Andrew Rouse	President	andrew@rouse-griffith.com.au	0424 750 406
John O'Hara	Vice-President	johnohara@optusnet.com.au	0444 552 212
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Richard Florey	Newsletter & Memberships	richarddflorey@gmail.com	0402 412 123



2025 Calendar of Events

Event	When	Organiser
FCHS Plant Collectors' Expo, Sassafras	8 th and 9 th March 2025	Emma Moysey 0418 340 240
Autumn Garden Visits	10 th May 2025	Andrew Rouse 0424 750 406
FCHS Talks, Sassafras, TBC	TBA	Emma Moysey 0418 340 240
ARSV Plant Sale, DRBG, Olinda	25 th October 2025	Alex Pottage 03 5786 1595
FCHS Plant Sale, Sassafras	25 th October 2025	Emma Moysey 0418 340 240
ARSV Annual General Meeting, DRBG, Olinda	1 st November 2025	Emma Moysey 0418 340 240
Spring Garden Visits, TBC	8 th and 9 th November 2025	Richard Florey 0402 412 123
FCHS Workshops, Sassafras, TBC	TBA	Emma Moysey 0418 340 240
ARSV Xmas BBQ / Propagation, DRBG, Olinda	16 th November 2025	Andrew Rouse 0424 750 406

Getting involved with ARSV at the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden

By Andrew Rouse, ARSV President

Getting involved with the ARSV Tuesday group at Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden

The ARSV is making a valuable contribution to the preservation of the plant collection at the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden. Each Tuesday, a bunch of ARSV members convene at the gardens and spend Tuesdays undertaking a range of tasks that support Parks Victoria with maintaining the plant collection at the gardens. I started with the ARSV Tuesday Group on an occasional basis in about 2012. I was still working full-time and would come to the gardens on a Tuesday when my work commitments permitted. It has been pleasing to see the Tuesday Group grow over time, and now we can have up to 15 participants on a Tuesday - space in our tea room can get pretty tight!

A typical Tuesday looks something like this:

- Members arrive at the gardens between 8 and 8.30AM. We have dedicated parking near our tea room.
- We convene in the tea room (in winter next to the wood heater!) to discuss the day's activities. There's typically 3-5 tasks to do, and once we've downed the first cup of coffee we break into groups to undertake these. New members of the Tuesday Group need to complete a registration with Parks Victoria; they then join one of the groups heading to the nursery or the gardens.
- We break for morning tea at 10AM and lunch at noon, and we wrap up shortly after lunch.

Over the years, ARSV have undertaken major improvements to the nursery facilities so that we now have a large shadehouse, two propagating glasshouses, a seedling propagation box ('Rouse House') and a potting shed. Close by is the Vireya House, which was refurbished by ARSV about 10 years ago, that houses the garden's vireya species collection.

The ARSV Tuesday Group undertake a range of activities at the gardens.



On a typical Tuesday, some of the members will head to the nursery where activities include:

- Checking the cuttings in the propagating glasshouses, and potting on those that have rooted. Once transplanted into individual pots, the cuttings are placed on a bottom heat bench in the shadehouse – this encourages on-going root growth during the cooler months.
- Checking the health of the plants in the shadehouse. Do they need watering? Or is it time for fertilising? Do we have an outbreak of pests or diseases?
- Collecting and preparing cuttings. Even though we have two propagating glasshouses, space is tight, so we have a rolling plan for what we need to propagate for the gardens and for sale.

The ARSV Tuesday Group manages the nursery database. A record is created for all new plant material entering the nursery. This helps us to keep tabs on the provenance of plants, all so important should the identity of a plant be called into question. Whilst some members are in nursery, others will be checking the Vireya House where regular tasks include weeding, pruning and supplementary watering in summer. There's also an annual inventory, and planting and replacing specimens as required.

The third area where the ARSV Tuesday Group is active, is in the gardens. We have a couple of members who dedicate their time to particular tasks in the garden such as weeding the rockery. About once a month, a group of up to ten ARSV Tuesday Group members will tackle a larger task such as weeding one of the garden beds, planting out, or undertaking an inventory of the plants in a bed. For example, in recent months we have been preparing a large bed that in Autumn will be planted out with vireya hybrids.



The plant inventories are vitally important tasks as it enables Parks Victoria and ARSV to maintain a record of the living plants in the gardens and so helping us to prioritise what we need to propagate. This is also undertaken as a group task, with one member operating the Garmin GPS (to record coordinates of plants found), a record keeper (recording the plants we find), and the remaining members systematically working their way through the bed checking each plant and calling out the details of what's on the plant label. Some of the ARSV Tuesday Group members have user access to Hortis, the garden's plant database, and assist Parks Victoria with creating and updating plant records on the system, including the findings from the plant inventories we undertake.

We'd welcome new members to the ARSV Tuesday Group! It's a great way to develop your horticultural skills, learn more about the rhododendrons and other plants, and make a meaningful contribution to the gardens alongside a bunch of other plant enthusiasts. All members are welcome, please get in touch with a committee member – contact details in this newsletter.

Getting involved with the Committee

ARSV Committee members are elected for three years. At the AGM in November, we typically have Committee members retiring after their three year service, so we are keen for members to nominate for the Committee. If you're interested or would like to discuss this, please, feel free to get in touch with me or another Committee member.

Getting involved with plant sales and new memberships on annual plant sales days

Each year, the Tuesday group work through the nursery to sort out and repot plants for the annual DRBG plant sales day and the annual Plant Collectors' Expo held at Ferny Creek Horticultural Society in Sassafras. It would be great to have more members help out the ARSV Tuesday group, as well as help out on the plant sales days. At the annual Plant Collectors' Expo for example, ARSV members help to attain new memberships in addition to selling a range of vireyas and rhododendrons species and hybrids.



ARSV annual Xmas gathering and plant propagation day

In 2025, ARSV plans to have its annual Xmas gathering combined with a propagation day (cutting gathering). The plan is to meet at the tearoom at 10am, tour DRBG collecting cuttings for propagation and pot the cuttings. Then have an Xmas BBQ lunch at 12:30pm. We have the pots, media, labels and space in the propagation house. This is an opportunity to propagate species or varieties you particularly like to enhance your collection, for plant sales and to expand plantings at DRBG. BYO secateurs and plastic bags. ARSV will supply BBQ food. BYO beverages and salad. Bring a partner.



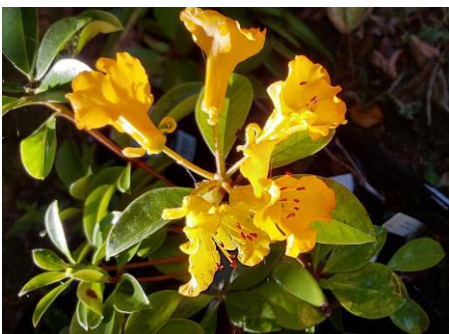
Member contributions of what's in flower



John O'Hara - *R. acrophilum*



John O'Hara – *R. viriosum* (Thornton Peak)



Richard Florey - Vireya Haloed Gold



Richard Florey – *R. dissilistellatum*

The Cloud Forest Collection, Dandenong Ranges Botanic Gardens

By Andrew Rouse, ARSV President

On the 4th of March, members of the ARSV Tuesday Group toured the Cloud Forest Collection, to see how the plants have handled their first summer in the ground. You may remember that The Cloud Forest Collection is the name for the garden that displays the plants collected by ARSV and other partners in the Tropical Mountain Plant Science project. The garden was planted out last winter and displays our two native rhododendron species – *R. viriosum* and *R. lochiaie* – and about 30 other tropical Queensland mountain-top species.

Many of the plants were quite small when they were planted out, so it was pleasing to see that nearly all of the specimens have survived Summer and most are doing well. Some of the rhododendron specimens, and particularly those close to rocks and paths, have some signs of heat stress but nearly all are now putting on new growth. The ARSV Tuesday Group did a weed and general tidy up in early February with Parks Victoria following up with a spray of remaining weeds and a foliar feed.

This Autumn, Parks Victoria and the ARSV Tuesday Group will commence the second round of planting, as well as commence taking cuttings of specimens we will need for planting out in 2026 and beyond.

On the 26th of February, John O'Hara, ARSV Vice-President, gave a presentation on the garden, on behalf of ARSV and Parks Victoria, at a BGANZ event. Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens, who were recipients of the Growing Victoria's Botanic Gardens grants program, presented on their projects – Parks Victoria received funding from this source for the garden. Please get in touch if you would like a copy of the presentation emailed to you.



R. carringtoniae



R. christiana



R. fallacinum



R. jasminiflorum ssp. *heusseri*



R. multicolor



R. vanvuureni



R. wilkiei



West Papua form of *R. konori*

Autumn Garden Visits 10th of May 2025 in the Dandenong Ranges

By Andrew Rouse, ARSV President

On Saturday 10th of May, three ARSV members in the Dandenong Ranges have kindly agreed to open their properties to the Society, consisting of a plant nursery and two private gardens. The private gardens are rarely open to the public and are being opened exclusively for the Society.

10:00AM - Meet at Rhodo Glen Nurseries, 6 Georges Road, The Patch. For over 70 years, Rhodo Glen Nurseries has supplied camellias and rhododendrons to the nursery trade. Andrew Raper will give a guided tour of the nursery including the propagation facilities, shade houses and nursery stock.

11:30AM - Drive to the Williamson garden, 3 Mernda Road, Olinda. Bruce Williamson will give a guided tour of the garden. BYO lunch. ARSV will provide tea and coffee.

1:15PM - Drive to Mount Dandenong to visit a recently created garden. The address will be provided on the day, and please note that parking is limited, so we will decide at that time if we need to car pool. Richard Bellemo, the garden designer, will give a guided tour of the garden. Please also note that by request of the owner, no photos or videos are permitted.

RSVP by 26th of April to Andrew Rouse (andrew@rouse-griffith.com.au or 0424 750 406) of your attendance and the number of people attending with you.